critical digest

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New York Theatre Diary

Almanac-re-opens Aug 23 at Imperial...The Fifth Season re-opens Sept 6 at Cort ..,The Pony Cart- Theatre de Lys 9/14/54. I B Joselow presents new play by Roger Garis...Dear Charles-Morosco 9/16/54. Tallulah Bankhead stars...All Summer Long-9/23/54 Robert Anderson's new play with June Walker, John Kerr...A Midsummer Night's Dream-Met House 9/21/54. Old Vic production with Moira Shearer...The Boy Friend-9/30/54 English musical with Julie Andrews.

Strawhat Tryouts

Put Them All Together, a new comedy by Viola Rubber, is an amusing blend of sex and society reports Dias, Variety after viewing it at Somerset, Mass. Plot now seems too contrived, and comedy material should be more shrewdly distributed...The Snow Was Black, George Simenon's drama adapted by Frances Frankle, is good off beat theatre far, but a questionable prospect for Broadway, notes Grif, Variety, after viewing debut at White Barn Theatre, Westport, Conn...Blues and Ballads, Libby Holman's one woman show which tried out at Dennis, Mass, is rated by Dias, Variety, as slightly out of place in a summer barn. Critic thinks it wise decision not to offer this one woman enterprise on Broadway...Miles of HeavenDavid Hertz new play which debuted at Orwigsburg, Pa, failed to catch the excitement inherent in lives of William and Caroline Herschel, panned Lama, Variety.

Playhouse inPark Success

Muncipal enterprise of Philadelphia, Pa Playhouse in the Park was highly commended by Atkinson, Times. If the Playhouse is good for Philadelphia, it is also good for the theatre as an institution. It proves that the general public likes theatre at agreeable prices, in a pleasant, informal environment. It is wholly reasonable, the critic predicts, to assume that other municipalities around America may want to establish similar theatres for their own people. Besides the obvious fact that the audience likes the plays, the players and the performance, the NY reviewer adds the lush and attractive Fairmont Park setting, the ease of free parking, and the cheerful multi-colored tent as reasons for the enterprises success.

London & Paris Reports

Hippo Dancing, adapted from the French and starring Robert Morley, is a delight in London, okayed Watts, Post. Usually overacting can ruin a play, but Morley shows how it should be done, and justifies the whole idea...Stratford on Avon's experiment this season of using young players is interesting and worthwhile, reports Sheaffer, Eagle, for both its pleasurable results and for the unintentional way it dramatizes the problems of Shakespearean acting...Macbeth at Avignon starts at 10 15 PM and last until 1 AM and is given in the open air at the Palace of the Popes, reports Lerner, Post. Title role was played as a tortured, neurotic character.

CD PLAYGOERS GUIDE CHART RESUMES SEPT 1

Off Broadway

Stage Right Players, Inc have signed Joey Ward for title role of Ricky opening Aug 27 at Carnegie Recital Hall... In Splendid Error, a new play by William Branch and dealing with John Brown will be presented Oct 7 at Greenwich News... Players Theatre, which is presenting The Cretan Woman at Provincetown Playhouse hunting for theatre to use in fall.

Two Long Island projects of interest are the Long Island Barter Theatre which is presenting The Glass Menagerie Aug 27-28, Sept 3-5 at American Legion Hall, Mineola, and the South Shore Drama Group production of 3 short plays on terrace of Graboi Estate, Lawrence, Aug 13-14.

West Coast

That's Life revue at Las Palmas, L.A. gives performances 7 nights per week... Seven Year Itch at Biltmore, L.A. closed after 5 week run..Picnic closed at Geary, S.F. after 5 week run...Peter Pan at Curran, S.F. and King and I at War Memorial Opera House, S.F. both broke house records.

Blaze of Glory, Leo Lieberman's new play which debuted at Laguna Beach Summer theatre, drew split notices. Hollywood Reporter reviewer believes mystery has Broadway chance if blue pencil used. Kap, Daily Variety, noted that only item worth keeping is second scene of second act. Play based on Walter Reuther shooting stars Lynn Bari and Alex Nicol. Women's Wear Daily reporter agrred with others that first act needed fixing, but thought play a worthy NY contender.

Vaudeville

Ernesto Bonimo, Italian singer, headlines Palace stage show. Also on bill are DeMattiazzis Dancing Dolls, Marty Maye and Eddie Hanley. Picture is "Human Desire" with Glenn Ford.

Theatre Film Notes

Alec Guiness' next film will be Madam Will You Walk...Marlon Brando will play "Sky Masterson" in Guys and Dolls film... Tom Ewell will play lead in 20th Century Fox production of The Seven Year Itch.

Theatre Book Comments

"The Life and Work of David Belasco, The Bishop of Broadway" by Craig Timberlake (Library Publishers) was panned by Down, Variety, as adding very little general knowledge of Belasco and of being poorly balanced.

"Future Indefinite", Noel Coward's continuation of his autobiography (Doubleday) might have better been tabbed "Past Pluperfect" reports Variety mugg. Critic feels that it is really the affection and respect of Noel Coward the author seeks, often quite desperately.

Theatre Record Comments

Kismet original cast album (RCA) shows the ingenious job of adaption Robert Wright and George Forrest have made from Borodin's score, praises Johnson, Post. By playing score in comparison to RCA's disc of Prince Igor you can easily see the relationship.

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Green Room Department

PLAYWRIGHTS TRAINING...Playwrights cannot be turned out en masse like actors or dancers at a school, points out "Stage" editorial. But they can be helped by working in an experimental theatre, free from any concern over box-office takings. In such a spot they should stand an excellent chance of being able to make the best use of their talents. Often, the British trade weekly reminds, these talents would never be appreciated unless they learn how to work hand in glove with the artists and technicians essential to bring plays to life on the boards.

COLETTE OBITS...Famous French novelist, best known to Americans as author of Gigi, was like her stories- French and feminine to the last degree, states Times editorial. Subtle, charming, witty, sympathetic and talented, they captured both the public and the professionals. Critics may find much that was ephemeral in her work, Herald Tribune editorial remarks, but she understood the human heart and wrote about it with a perceptiveness that few literary artists of our time have surpassed.

SUMMER BOOM...Strawhat managers have as much respect for the weather as farmers, notes Smith, Wall St. Journal. Richard Aldrich hunch that August business may be better than June and July is based in part on his belief that the latter months actually were a bit cool on Cape Cod. Mike Ellis' Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, PA. devices for success this season include: free iced tea on Wed and Sat matinees, chartered busses from Philadelphia for Sat matinees, personal chats with audience before curtain time, invitations to playgoers to visit with the actors backstage after Mon performances, 20% discounts to groups,.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Virginia Vincent, who appears certain for selection for one of the early fall plays, is one of the best of the younger actresses, labels More-House, World Telegram & Sun. Johnson, Post, admits to seeing The Pajama Game twice within the past three weeks, and is willing to go soon again if anybody asks her...Wall St. Journal editorial writer wonders if he did the right thing in returning the barn on his farm to the cows...Dublin drama critic Seamus Kelly, who is playing a role in the "Moby Dick" film, would have a notable screen career if he ever decides to give up journalism for the less heroic but better paying movie profession, predicts Watts, Post.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Margaret Truman has been winning greenbacks and ovations on her summer tour in Autumn Crocus, reports Glover, AP. Crowds have come partly through curiosity, but remained to be charmed by her very determined effort to please. She would like to continue on the stage, but has not thought about a next play.

Pros & Cons by TMK

16 plays and musicals are continuing into August. For the time being at least this explodes another Broadway myth that there is no Broadway audience come summer. While Off Broadway another half dozen shows defy the elements and the "air cooled" signs. Though some may think these signs and ads should be changed to "air cooked" the fact remains that hearty playgoers go to the theatre, summer or winter hot or cold. London producers, unlike their NY colleagues, continue to schedule openings through July and August. Maybe some day a NY producer may decide that even in summer the play and not the weather is the thing. Then playgoers, and even drama critics, would not become rusty during the summer months.

The success of the NY City Center's production of Carousel has insured the presentation of an annual series of musical revivals each May and June. Next year's plans call for three revivals again, each given three weeks instead of two. The only definite offering so far is Finian's Rainbow, which will be given last. Producer William Hammerstein hopes that this might turn out to be a hit, like Carousel, and be able to run during the summer months.

Plays

Carousel and The Golden Apple closed...Tickets for the Old Vic presentation of A Midsummer Night's Dream are now on sale at the box office of the Metropolitan Opera House...The Rodgers and Hart Song Book will be presented in March by Jule Styne... Giraudoux's The Trojan War ShallNot Take Place, adapted by Christopher Fry, will be presented by Robert Joseph in London prior to NY production...Dear Charles with Tallulah Bankhead opens Sept 16 at Morosco...ANTA Guild Playhouse will add 250 seats.

People

Joseph Buloff will star in The Fifth Season, replacing Menasha Skulnik, when comedy re-opens at Sept 5, Sunday matinee...Dody Heath joined Oh Men! Oh Women! in part originated by Anne Jackson...Jack Manning and Julia Meade joined The Tender Trap cast ...Dane Clark will star in Fragile Fox...Mike Wallace joins Reclining Nude...Eliot Makeham will play Peter Quince in A Midsummer Night's Dream...Ralph Levy will direct Maxwell Anderson's The Masque of Queens, not The Bad Seed as previously announced.

Summer Playhouses

Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, NJ, has extended their season through Thanksgiving. Four new plays will be produced. House advertised present production of Stalag 17 as having "no member of the original Broadway cast. No other summer theatre can make that statement."...Arabian Nights will tour the nation this fall and spring and reopen next summer at Jones Beach...Lambertville, NJ Music Circus is presenting The Boys From Syracuse.

Other Broadways

Vienna postal authorities have introduced a new telephone service whereby theatregoers can dial a special number and be informed if seats are available for the night at the four state owned theatres...D'Oyly Carte returns to London's Savoy Theatre on Sept 13.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

CBS Radio World Music Festivals will present Aug 15 9 excerpts from Hamlet production of Old Vic at Elsinore with Richard Burton, Claire Bloom and Fay Compton...Ann Southern stars in NBC TV Lady in the Dark Sept 25.

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